

An Assessment of Post University Matriculation Examination: A Case Study of University of Benin

Chika Josephine A. Ifedili and John C. Ifedili

Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria
E-mail: theifedilis@yahoo.com
Faculty of Pharmacy, Uniben P.O. Box 10073, Ugbowo, Nigeria

KEYWORDS Assessment. University. Admission. Examinations. Nigeria

ABSTRACT This study is a case study which looked at the effectiveness of Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) and Post-University Matriculation Examination (PUME) on the admitted students of year 2004-2005 Session who were admitted by the last JAMB and 2005-2006 session students who were admitted by the first PUME following the protest from JAMB, parents and students on the introduction of PUME.. The population of the study was the eleven faculties in the University of Benin. Seven faculties were randomly selected to form the sample. A Likert-type questionnaire augmented with interview and a format to retrieve the first year results of the students were used to gather the data. The major finding showed the supremacy of PUME over JAMB in selecting the best candidate for university education. Only 11.66% of candidates who passed JAMB and presented themselves for PUME scored 50% and above. Among the first year students of 2004-2005, 14.23% passed all their first year courses, 66.94% students had carryover while 18.80% were on probation. For 2005-2006 first year students, 39.65% passed all their courses, 53.80% had carryovers while 6.54% were on probation. Based on the above, it was recommended that PUME should continue to carry out the final selection exercise in order to restore the lost glory to the universities.

INTRODUCTION

Before the establishment of Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) for the admission of students into various universities, various Nigerian universities were conducting individual admission exercise. Series of complaints marred this type of admission process ranging from unfairness in admission to multiple admissions. Because of this, in 1974, the committee of Vice-Chancellors came up with the idea of central admission in order to eliminate various problems created by individual university admission exercise. In 1975, Nigerian Universities including state universities were taken over by the Federal Government. In 1978, Decree No. 2 established Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB). JAMB conducted its first admission examination into all degree awarding universities in Nigeria the same year. Decree No.2 was amended in 1989 by Decree No. 33, which was subsequently amended by Decree No. 4 of 1993. By this Decree 4, JAMB was given extra task of conducting examination for placement of suitably qualified candidates not only into the universities but also into all Nigerian tertiary institutions-universities, polytechnics and colleges of education.

The demand for entry into Nigerian universities is usually very high and competitive. With

a population of about one hundred and forty million, there has been an increase in the demand for university education. At present, the total number of Nigerian universities both private and public is 91 with 1,096,312 students (Victor 2007). To ensure equal opportunities of admission of prospective candidates from various states, the admission policy of JAMB is by quota system. This is divided into 40% for academic merit, 30% for catchment areas, 20% for educationally less developed areas and 10% for discretion. The catchment areas include the area or state in the immediate vicinity of the university. The educationally disadvantaged states are essentially the Northern States and the Southern minorities. The northern rulers in order to level up educational disparity in Nigeria have used the instrument called the "quota system" as a reflection of federal character.. This, however, has been highly criticized by many as a suppression of excellence and diligence while promoting mediocrity (Ifedili 2005). The Nigerian Human Rights made it clear that everyone should be treated equally as citizens of the country. The same government came up with quota system policy which discriminates against some brilliant candidates who may score above 60% in the examination while admitting a candidate with a low score of 40%. This may be just because the poor scorer may even be the

highest scorer in his or her state of origin. Because of quota system, this poor performer may even be put on the merit list for his state. There is no way meritocracy and equality can be perfectly matched as prescribed under the system. The quota system leads to lowering of educational standard, loss of educational equality and distraction from the goal of excellence, which should be pursued in higher education.

Since JAMB started its operation, individuals, corporate bodies and different levels of government have accused JAMB of massive corrupt practices. To this the researcher felt, that the citizens themselves agreed with the verdict of Transparent International which ranked Nigeria as the second most corrupt nation in the world (Punch 2003). Every Nigerian parent would like their children to be graduates and must be achieved by all means whether by hooks and crooks. Adenipekun (2007) alerted the Nigerian public on the new trends the exam fraudsters were catching up with the new technology. Ugiagbe in 2005 found that candidates who performed poorly in JAMB performed better in their first year result in the universities.

Many students now cheat with their smuggled in mobile phones despite the fact that it was illegal to bring them into the examination hall. The quality of students admitted by JAMB was deteriorating yearly despite their high scores in JAMB. Many parents register their children for JAMB earlier than educational policy had planned for them. This according to Onyeoziri (1989) was done due to great dissatisfaction with JAMB and unpredictable changes in educational policies, which may warrant the candidates for JAMB exam to stay extra one year at school.

Before the introduction of PUME, it was usually difficult to buy JAMB forms and register for the examination as well as frustrating to get the result when they were ready. Because of the late release of results, some universities had no option than to allow their first year students to begin lectures very late. The quality of education was falling due to production of half-baked graduates. Many of these engage in examination malpractice throughout their stay in the university. The former Nigerian President, Obasanjo accused JAMB of corrupt practices (Ade 2006), which he said had affected the standard of education in Nigeria. This had made University Matriculation Examination no longer a yardstick to be relied upon as true reflection of candidates'

performance. This has led to the former President's recommendation of further screening for those who had the cut off point for admission in JAMB. This further screening is called Post University Matriculation Examination (PUME), which is organized by individual universities after JAMB had selected for them. The Nigerian President further retaliated that PUME would restore the past glory of tertiary education in the country and would make university education only for those who want it and need it. This is based on the belief that it is axiomatic that a nation without a strong educational base is bereft of hope and future (Ebiri 2006).

PUME organized their first admission exercise for the students who entered in 2005-2006 session. There were however, so many oppositions to PUME. These came from students, parents and wards who could not guarantee their admissions. Oppositions also came from JAMB executives who feared that their functions were being threatened. Then from the JAMB workers, who felt that their quick way of making illegal money was being blocked. These have complained bitterly and still do not seem to see any difference in the quality of candidates admitted by PUME. They see PUME as extra task on parents to pay for another admission exercise and also as more stress on the students who are seeking for the admissions.

Statement of the Problem

The general feeling by JAMB workers, parents and students about the task of conducting another screening admission exercise to universities is causing a lot of concern to the educationists. The admission of poor calibre of candidates has led to high failure rate, increase in the examination malpractice, high drop out rate and the production of poor quality output that are neither self reliant nor able to contribute effectively in the world of work. There is need to find out if there has been any change in the performance of candidates admitted by PUME. Also, there is a need to find out whether those who scored highly in JAMB, also scored highly in PUME.

The following leading questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What percentage of the students who passed JAMB registered for PUME in year 2005-2006?
2. What percentage of students who passed

- admission cut off point in JAMB passed PUME in year 2005-2006?
3. What is the difference between the performance of first year students of 2004-2005 session admitted into the universities through JAMB only and 2005-2006 first year students who were admitted by PUME?

Based on the above the following null hypotheses are raised:

HO1 There will be no significant difference in the responses of lecturers and students on the relative effectiveness of PUME compared to JAMB.

HO2 There will be no significant difference in the responses of lecturers and administrators on the relative effectiveness of PUME compared to JAMB.

Significance of the Study

As Nigeria strives to achieve growth and development in economic, social and political sectors of the economy, it is imperative that students who are the future leaders should be prepared to take over the burden of continuous national development. Education, which is the bedrock of academic wisdom and a major developmental instrument, must be given the necessary attention. The selection of right candidates for the university education would bring about the production of right human resources who are the major factor of production. The students who are not academically gifted would go into the vocational areas and excel their talents as the Universal Basic Education has planned for them. The government's scarce resources which are being wasted in form of high failure rate, high repeaters' rate and high drop out rate, by educating both academically and non-academically citizens would now be conserved for other developmental purposes. The lecturers will find teaching easier by imparting knowledge on those individuals who are focused and disciplined. Discipline among the students is absolutely an essential ingredient for an enabling operational climate in the school. The attitudes and values of students constitute not only an important integral dimension of their education but also the critical factor in the level of discipline one would expect in the school system, and indeed, in the large society. The management will find it much easier to manage the disciplined students. This will make the goals of education to be achieved effectively and efficiently.

METHOD OF STUDY

The research is a case study, which tries to assess the performance of candidates admitted into the universities with JAMB and PUME as compared to admissions with only JAMB. The population of the study consisted of all second and third year students in the eleven faculties of University of Benin, lecturers and administrators. Out of these eleven faculties, a random sampling method was used to select seven faculties (58% of the population) that participated in the study.

The instrument used in collecting data was a Likert-type questionnaire, which was augmented by interview. The questionnaire had two parts. Part A was demographic in nature while Part B contained ten questions on the effectiveness of PUME and JAMB. From the sampled faculties, 400 lecturers and 1500 students were randomly selected to fill the questionnaire. Also a random sampling method was used to select the 120 administrators who participated in the study. A format was used to extract the first year results of students admitted in 2004-2005 session and students admitted in 2005-2006 session. The first set of students (2004-2005) was admitted with JAMB only while the second set of students (2005-2006) was admitted with both JAMB and PUME. Results were broken down into successful students, carry-over students and probation students. Successful students were the students who passed all their courses. The carry-over students were those who failed some courses but passed enough courses to move to the next level. The failed courses are carried over to the next level. The probation students were the students who passed only few courses which did not meet the minimum requirement to move over to the next level but made enough to still remain in the system and repeat all the courses both the ones passed and the ones failed. A z-test and simple percentage were the statistical methods used. The format used was a predictor criterion related one and has a predictive validity. The statistical data used was very reliable.

RESULTS

Question 1: What percentage of students who passed JAMB registered for PUME in year 2005-2006?

From table 1, it could be seen that 8.99% of the candidates did not register for the examination while 91.09% did.

Question 2: What percentage of students

who passed JAMB passed PUME in year 2005-2006?

From table 2, only 4,069 (11.66%) candidates that presented themselves for PUME scored 50% and above which was considered as a pass mark. This is to say that 30,823 (88.34%) failed PUME. Other revelations were, according to Nwanze (2006), that the best five JAMB scores did not score up to 40% in PUME. Also, only two candidates passed PUME out of twenty-six candidates in JAMB merit list. In Law, the best 16 candidates failed the PUME. In Pharmacy, the best fifteen scores in PUME were not on JAMB merit list.

Question 3: What is the difference between the performance of first year students of 2004 – 2005 who were admitted by the last JAMB exercise and 2005-2006 students who were admitted by the first PUME exercise?

From table 3a and table 3b, in 2004-2005 session examination, the average percentage of successful candidates in their first year result was 14.23%, the carryover students was 66.94% while the probation students was 18.80%. These were the students admitted by the last JAMB.

For the first year students in 2005-2006 session who were admitted by the first PUME, the average percentage of successful candidates was 39.65%, the carryover students was 53.80% while the probation students was 6.54%. The students that were admitted with PUME performed much better than those admitted with JAMB. This is a clear manifestation of PUME being the ideal screening process.

H01: There will be no significant difference in the responses of lecturers and students as to the effectiveness of PUME.

The above null hypothesis was tested with the data collected from the questionnaire and the result is as in table 4.

From table 4, the calculated Z-value at 0.05-confidence level was 6.19 while the table value was 1.96. The null hypothesis that there will be no significant difference in the responses of lecturers and students as to the effectiveness of PUME is therefore rejected. All the lecturers rated the change in students' performance as being very high while the students agreed with the lecturers that there was change in the performance

Table 1: Percentage of students who passed JAMB registered for PUME in year 2005-2006?

Year	JAMB	PUME	% present	% absent
2005-2006	38,340	34,892	91.01.	8.99

Table 2: Percentage of students who passed JAMB passed PUME in year 2005-2006?

Particular	No. (%)
Number of students who presented themselves for PUME exam	34,892 (91.00)
Number that passed PUME (score of 50% and above)	4069 (11.66)
Percentage failure in PUME	30,823 (88.34)

Table 3a: Analysis of first year performance of students in 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 sessions

Faculties	Year	Percentage of successful candidates	Percentage carryovers	Percentage probation
1	2005	4.3	67.9	27.8
	2006	30.0	51.8	18.2
2	2005	11.5	78.5	10.0
	2006	26.6	73.0	0.5
3	2005	8.9	76.5	14.6
	2006	23.8	74.9	1.3
4	2005	10.5	85.0	4.5
	2006	37.8	59.2	3.0
5	2005	14.5	79.7	5.8
	2006	55.0	42.3	2.7
6	2005	11.5	56.1	32.4
	2006	44.4	49.1	6.5
7	2005	38.63	24.89	36.48
	2006	59.92	26.48	13.60

Table 3b: Average percentage of performance between first year students 2004-05/2005-06

Year	% successful students	% carryover students	% on probation students
2004-2005	14.23	66.94	18.80
2005-2006	39.65	53.80	6.54

Table 4: Test of significant difference in the responses of lecturers and students as to the effectiveness of PUME

Statistics	Lecturers	Students	Calculated z-value	Table value
Number	400	1500		
Mean	3.8	3.12	6.19	1.96
Sd	.16	.21		

but responded that the change was average. When the lecturers were interviewed, they opined that teaching had become easier; the students were punctual and the class attendance was now encouraging. They further expressed that many of the PUME students were scholars and were focused while most of the JAMB students were not focused and behaved as if they had nothing at stake. Eighty-five percent of the students agreed with the lecturers that the PUME students were serious minded and would not like to be distracted with anything not concerned with their academics. They however opined that although the students were focused, the inadequate facilities in the university were making some of the students not to put in their best.

H02: The null hypothesis which states that there will be no significant difference in the responses of lecturers and administrators as to the effectiveness of PUME was tested as on table 5 .

Table 5: Test of significant difference in the responses of lecturers and administrators as to the effectiveness of PUME

Statistics	Adminis- trators	Lecturers	Calculated z-value	Table value
Number	120	400		
Mean	3.84	3.80	1.74	1.96
SD	.23	.16		

From table 5, the calculated Z-value at 0.05-confidence level is 1.74, while the table value is 1.96. The null hypothesis that there will be no significant difference in the responses of the lecturers and administrators is therefore retained.

Both the lecturers and the administrators rated PUME effectiveness as being high. Some of the administrators interviewed agreed that PUME screening had brought focused students to the university. This according to them has resulted in better management. Also there has been a decline on the unexpected outcomes in the university like cultism, examination malpractice etc.

DISCUSSION

From the analysis of data, out of 34,892 candidates who presented themselves for Post University Matriculation examination, only 4069 (11%) passed with the scores of 50% and above while 30,823 (88.34%) failed. This finding agreed with President Obasanjo observation that Joint Admission and Matriculation Board engaged in

corrupt practices. And his recommendation of further screening has proven to be a better reflection of candidates' performance. The data on table 3b which showed the average performance of students admitted into the university in 2004/2005 who were the last batch of students admitted by JAMB and 2005/2006 students who were the first set admitted by PUME, showed some changes in their performance. The 2004/2005 students had only 14.23% of them successful in their sessional examination, 66.94 had carryover courses while 18.80% were on probation. For 2005/2006 students, 39.65% of students were successful, 53.80% had carryover courses while 6.54% were on probation. This has also proven PUME to be an ideal yardstick.

Both the lecturers and the administrators agreed that PUME had brought a high positive change both in the students' performance and in the discipline in the university. This is as a result of admitting focussed and disciplined students.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The foregoing has shown that Nigeria, in order to bring back the lost glory of university education, must embrace PUME. JAMB can continue to be the primary screening exercise for university admission while PUME will continue to be the final screening exercise. PUME has improved on the quality of candidates admitted into the university. Also, some of unexpected outcomes of education like cultism, examination malpractice etc. are now partially controlled. The management also find it much easier to manage disciplined focused students. There is a general agreement among students, lecturers and administrators that PUME is a better screening process for admission into the universities in Nigeria.

In order to improve on the quality of students admitted, the following recommendations are made to help bring more meaningful co-existence of JAMB and PUME: Seminars, conferences and workshops should be organized to enlighten the public on the importance of PUME. A flat fee should be charged for PUME screening exercise. There should be integrity training for JAMB and PUME examination officers. Any JAMB or PUME officer found to be corrupt should be immediately removed. There should be re-organization in JAMB. More organizational effort and planning should be instilled in the system. The problem with JAMB is that it seems to be too poorly

organized to cope with its crises. There should be a limit as to the number of times a candidate should sit for JAMB. A suggestion of four years is recommended. JAMB and PUME results should be released without delay. This will prevent lobbying. Those who are charged with organizing JAMB and PUME should maintain high integrity, sanity and accountability. There should be provision of adequate educational facilities and materials. Finally, there is need for better funding of the universities.

REFERENCES

- Adenikpekun O 2007. Candidates in new trick to pass jamb. *Vanguard*, May 10, P 43.
- Ande E 2006..Obasanjo accuses jamb of corrupt practices. *Guardian*, June 13, P. 7.
- Ebiri K 2006. Post jamb basis for admission says Obasanjo. *Guardian*, April 13, P. 49.
- Ifedili CJ 2005. Desirable standard in the Nigerian tertiary education- a challenge to policy makers and implementers in Educational Standards in the 21st Century in Nigeria. CC Nwagwu, AO Imogie (Eds.): *Proceedings of National Conference September 17th –20th, 2003*. Benin City: Institute of Education, pp. 105-119.
- Nwanze EAC 2006. *Uniben blazes trail on pume, startling revelations emerge*. Uniben Campus News: 2.11, July 30.
- Punch 2003. Transparency ranks Nigeria second most corrupt nation. October 8, P. 3.
- Ugiagbe EI 2005. *A Study on Jamb-Ume as a Predictor of Academic Performance of Students in the First Year Political Science Degree Programme*. Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. Unpublished.
- Victor S 2007. Nigerian universities have 1,09 m students – NUC *Punch*, Nov. 3, P. 10.